ships in more friendly and cooperative mould. The 'Gujral doctrine' emphasises five principles; *First,* with neighbours, India does not ask for reciprocity, but gives and accommodates in good faith and trust. *Second,* no South Asian country should allow its territory to be used against other countries of the region. *Third,* none will interfere in the internal affairs of another. *Fourth,* all South Asian coiuntries must respect each other's territorial integrity and sovereignty; and *finally,* they will settle all their disputes through peaceful bilateral negotiations.

The Gujaral doctrine provides an alternate approach based on co-operation to contain conflicts, and ultimately transforming them peacefully. The fundamental premises of this doctrine are: (i) India's relations must be built on asymmetry in a cooperative sense. India as the biggest country in the region must do more for its neighbours than it can expect in return as its size and resources are manifold as compared to other countries in the region. (ii) All countries must respect the rule of non-interference in the internal affairs, Territorial Integrity and Sovereignty of others. (III) India must not intervene militarily in another country unless asked by that country and unless its security is threatened.

(b) This new approach towards our neighbours, particularly towards, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Nepal and Bhutan has led to the resolution of many outstanding issues, has created better atmosphere of understanding and also of more meaningful cooperation. Liberal trends in Indian economy and opening of its market to the neighbours on favourable terms has been of long term significance. Decision of forming SAPTA and aiming at SAFTA after a few years will further strengthen this trend as discussed at the SAARC Summit at Male (12 to 14 May, 1997), There was general agreement with SAARC to strengthen its activities in core economic sectors, and it was agreed that the Third Round of SAPTA negotiations (on trade liberalisation) would be launched in July and concluded by December, when the SAARC Commerce Ministers would meet in Pakistan to review progress on the occassion of the Second SAARC Trade Fair.

(c) and (d) India's position in the SAARC is stronger. Its new foreign policy approach has succedded in establishing sub-regional economic cooperration within the SAARC. This is considered a significant achievement for indian diplomacy, having far reaching consequences for the geo-economics and geo-politics of the region. Undoibetedly, the new diplomatic initiative has generated goodwill between India and other countries of the neighbourhood.

Sri Lanka's foreign minister made a rather striking statement that India is Sri Lanka's only immediate neighbour. In Bangladesh, there is a new found optimism to deal with India after the Ganga water-sharing accord. Bangladesh is now forthcoming and positive on the issue such as the Chakma refugees, combating cross-border insurgencies and terrorism, and providing transit facilites for Indian goods. Also in Pakistan, the doctrine has won some admirers, even in establishment.

India's Policy towards Afghanistan

171. SHRI PREM CHAND GUPTA: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the take-over of North Afghanistan by the Taliban has been thwarted by the forces of Dostum and Masood;

(b) If so, what is the policy of our Government in this regard; and

(c) how india's interests in the region are affected?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRIMATI KAMLA SINHA): (a) The take-over of northern Afghanistan by the

Taliban was prevented by the forces the Northern Alliance.

(b) Government of India continue to recognise the Government of Prof. Burhanuddin Rabbani as the legitimate government of Afghanistan.

(c) Government continue to closely follow development in Afghanistan as these have a bearing on India's security and on the peace and stability of the region, and will take all necessary steps to safeguard India's interests.

Agreement on Transit rights among India, Nepal and Bangladesh

172. SHRI PREM CHAND GUPTA: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that India, Nepal and Bangladesh are working towards an agreement on transit rights by air, land and waterways; and

(b) if so, by when this would become a reality?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRIMATI KAMLA SINHA): (a) No, Sir.

(b) Does not arise.

Foreign Secretaries level Talks Between India and Pakistan

173. SHRI JANARDHANA POOJARY:
SHRI ANANTRAY DEVSHANKER DAVE:
SHRI BANGARU LAXMAN:
SHRIMATI ANANDIBEN JETHABHAI PATEL:

Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Indo-Pakistan Foreign Secretaries level talks were held in the third week of June, 1997 at Islamabad;

(b) if so, the outcome thereof;

(c) the details of the discussions held and the areas of agreement and disagreement;

(d) whether the question of Sir Creek was taken up in the meeting; and

(e) if so, the decision arrived at on this issue?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRIMATI KAMLA SINHA): (a) to (c) The second round of the resumed Foreign Secretary level talks between India and Pakistan was held in Islamabad from 19—23 June, 1997. A Joint statement was issued on 23 June, 1997 in Islamabad on the conclusion of the talks.

The two sides decided to address, *inter alia,* the following subjects: (a) peace and security, including CBMs; (b) Jammu and Kashmir; (c) Siachen; (d) Tulbul Navigation Project; (e) Sir Creek; (f) Terrorism and drug trafficking; (g) Economic and Commercial Cooperation; (h) Promotion of friendly exchanges in various fields. They also agreed to set up a mechanism, including working groups at appropriate levels, to addess all these issues in an integrated manner; the issues at (a) and (b) above will be dealt at the level of the Foreign secretaries, who will also coordinate and monitor the progress of all the working groups. Both sides further agreed to take all possible steps to prevent hostile propaganda and provocative actions against each other.

(d) and (e) The discussions focussed primarily on establishing modalities and mechanism for future talks. Sir Creek has been identified as one of the issues for future discussions.

MEA's Role to Promote Investment and Trade Flows

174. DR. MOHAN BABU: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Ministry of External Affairs plays active role in wooing foreign funds for core-sectors;